



# Butrint / Buthrotum

Some notes to the flora of an archaeological site in southern Albania

Prof. Dr. Dietmar Brandes

2017

# Geobotany meets archaeology

Butrint (Buthrotum) is situated in southern Albania at the coast of the Ionian Sea, some 15 km south of Saranda and only few kilometres east of the isle of Corfu.

The area around the antique town of Butrint (Buthrotum) shows a high diversity of habitats like Mediterranean oak forests, maquis, ruderal and artificial habitats as well as different coastal vegetation types. The map of Natural Vegetation of Europe mentions evergreen mesomediterranean holm oak forest as well as moist lowland riparian forest (Bohn & Neuhäusl 2003). The coastal vegetation belongs to the *Andrachno-Quercetum* sub-zone [Aegean sub-zone] (map by V. Glavač 1968 in Horvat; Glavač & Ellenberg 1974).

# Nymphaeum inside the Butrint gymnasium







Nymphaeum (2th century AD)





Early Christian basilica

# Wall flora

Dry and insolated walls: *Centranthus* cf. *longiflorus* ssp. *junceum*, *Micromeria juliana*, *Parietaria judaica*, *Phagnalon rupestre* ssp. *graecum*.

Top of the wall: *Campanula ramosissima*, *Catapodium rigidum*, *Lagurus ovatus*, *Myosotis* cf. *ramosissima*, *Rostraria cristata*, *Trifolium campestre*, *Valantia muralis*, *Veronica* cf. *arvensis*, *Vulpia* cf. *myuros*.

Old city wall and other walls (often shaded): *Anogramma leptophylla*, *Asplenium* cf. *onopteris*, *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Blackstonia perfoliata*, *Calystegia sylvatica*, *Campanula erinus*, *Campanula ramosissima*, *Campanula versicolor*, *Ficus carica* juv., *Geranium purpureum*, *Hedera helix*, *Mercurialis annua*, *Micromeria julianae*, *Oxalis corniculata*, *Parietaria judaica*, *Parietaria lusitanica*, *Polypodium cambricum*, *Quercus coccifera* juv., *Selaginella denticulata*, *Smilax aspera*, *Theligonum cynocrambe*, *Umbilicus chloranthus*, *Verbena officinalis*.





Venetian watchtower

## Species of the (mostly) evergreen oak woods

Acer monspessulanus, Allium subhirsutum, Arum italicum,  
Celtis australis, Cercis siliquastrum,  
Ficus carica, Fraxinus angustifolius, Hedera helix,  
Laurus nobilis, Melica uniflora, Melissa officinalis ssp. altissima,  
Olea europaea, Orobanche hederæ, Parietaria judaica, Punica granatum,  
Quercus coccifera, Quercus ilex, Quercus pubescens,  
Rubia peregrina, Ruscus aculeatus,  
Smilax aspera,  
Tamus communis,  
Ulmus minor.



Quercus ilex







Butrint Agora: Sanctuary of Asklepius and theatre





Theatre





Theatre and Sanctuary of Asclepius





Sanctuary of Asclepios





Spring near the stoa





Late antique Gate Vivari





*Quercus pubescens*, a deciduous species of the genus Oak



# Succession starts immediately after excavation



*Dioscorea communis* (= *Tamus* c.)  
This climbing herbaceous plant is typical of the forest understory.





Baptistery





*Calystegia sylvatica* climbing on old walls



Climbing plants are very common on the archaeological area




*Asparagus acutifolius*



*Calystegia sylvatica*





Hedera helix, a common liana of the forests and especially of their skirts



# Notes to the flora of edges and skirts of the wood as well as of clearings

Acer cf. monspessulanum, Aegonychon purpureocaeruleum (= Lithospermum purpureocaeruleum), Asparagus acutifolius, Bryonia spec., Calystegia sylvatica, Campanula ramosissima, Clematis flammula, Dorycnium hirsutum, Euphorbia dendroides, Fumaria capreolata, Ornithogalum narbonensis, Osyris alba, Phlomis fruticosa, Spartium junceum, Smyrniolus olusatrum, Verbascum niveum ssp. visianianum



# Reconstruction of the old town (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)



[Information board for visitors of the Butrint area]



# Lion's gate



*Selaginella denticulata*







*Trifolium campestre*



*Centranthus* cf. *longiflorus*



*Fraxinus ornus* juv.







**Ephemeral wall vegetation**  
with *Blackstonia perfoliata*, *Anogramma leptophylla*,  
*Campanula erinus*, *Parietaria lusitanica*





Umbilicus chloranthus  
and  
Parietaria lusitanica





*Asplenium trichomanes*





*Lagurus ovatus*







View from the acropolis south over the agora and the Vivari channel to the Vrina Plain



Neophytic species *Opuntia ficus-indica*







Lizard  
*Algyroides cf. nigropunctatus*



*Fumaria capreolata*





# Campanula ramosissima





# Ruderal species of the archaeological site of Butrint

Anagallis arvensis, Anisantha madritensis, Anisantha rigida,

Bellis spec., Bunias erucago,

Capsella bursa-pastoris, Convolvulus arvensis, Convolvulus elegantissimus, Crepis rubra, Cynoglossum creticum,

Dasypyrum villosum, Dittrichia viscosa,

Echium plantagineum, Erodium malacoides, Euphorbia peplus,

Geranium brutium, Geranium molle, Glaucium flavum,

Hordeum bulbosum, Hordeum leporinum, Hirschfeldia inacana,

Lavatera cretica,



## Ruderal species of the archaeological site of Butrint (continued)

Malva parviflora, Malva sylvestris, Medicago orbicularis,  
Medicago polymorpha, Mercurialis annua,  
Ochlopoa annua (= Poa annua), Onopordum illyricum,  
Plantago coronopus, Polygonum arenastrum, Potentilla  
reptans,  
Ricinus communis, Rumex pulcher,  
Sambucus ebulus, Scleropoa rigida, Sonchus oleraceus,  
Stellaria media, Symphotrichum squamatum (= Aster  
squamatus), Stachys cf. cretica,  
Trifolium campestre, Trifolium resupinatum, Trifolium  
tomentosum.  
Verbascum niveum ssp. visianianum





Cynoglossum creticum



*Trifolium tomentosum*





*Hordeum bulbosum*







View of the Vivari Channel with Corfu, seen from the Venetian Acropolis Castle (reconstructed in the 1930s).



*Osyris alba*





*Dorycnium hirsutum*







Ornithogalum  
narbonense  
(= Loncomelos n.)





*Aegonychon pupurocaerulem*  
(= *Lithospermum pupurpurocaeruleum*)





Galactites tomentosa



*Crepis rubra*







*Nigella damascena*





Triangular venetian castle at the opposite site of the Vivari Channel



Plantago coronopus







Crithmum maritimum growing near the coast in the influence of saline water spray



# Literature and address of the author

Barnes, P. (2006): Some Albania ferns. – [www.barnes-botany.co.uk/ferns\\_albania.html#plants](http://www.barnes-botany.co.uk/ferns_albania.html#plants) (vidi 2017-4-15).

Bohn, U. & R. Neuhäusl (eds.)(2003): Karte der natürlichen Vegetation Europas. Map of Natural Vegetation of Europe. – Bonn: Bundesamt f. Naturschutz.

Ceka, N. (2005): Buthrotum – seine Geschichte und seine Bauwerke. – Tiranë. 52 S.

Demiri, M. (1983): Flora ekskursioniste e Shqipërisë. – Tiranë. 985 S.

Horvat, I., Glavač, V. & Ellenberg, H. (1974): Vegetation Südosteuropas. – Stuttgart. XXXII, 768 S.

*Address:* Prof. Dr. Dietmar Brandes, AG Vegetationsökologie, Institut für Pflanzenbiologie, Technische Universität Braunschweig, Mendelssohnstraße 4, 38108 Braunschweig, Germany

.

[http://www.ruderal-vegetation.de/verschiedene\\_regionen](http://www.ruderal-vegetation.de/verschiedene_regionen)